

ISSANJI HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

57 HARTFORD STREET SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94114 TELEPHONE: (415) 863-2507

SEPTEMBER 1993

REGULAR SCHEDULE:

MORNINGS:

Monday **through Friday**, Zazen Meditation - 5:00 to 5:40 a.m. Kinhin (walking meditation) 5:40 to 5:50, Zazen - 5:50 to 6:30.

Saturday Mornings - informal Zazen 9:10 to 10:00, Dharma talk 10:00 a.m..

EVENINGS:

Monday through Friday, Zazen 6:00 to 6:40 p.m.. Service - 6:40 to 7:00 p.m..

Sixth of each month - 6:40 p.m. Memorial Service for Temple Founder, Issan Dorsey roshi.

OTHER:

First Saturday of each month - All day sitting (\$15 sangha members, \$20 others - sign up list on bulletin board next to Zendo entrance). (Sept. 4th, Oct. 2nd, Nov. 6th, Dec. 4th).

Mondays at 5:00 p.m. - Introduction to zazen and zendo. Please call first.

DHARMA SISTERS WOMEN'S SITTING GROUP - 7:20 to 8:00 p.m. alternating Tues. and Weds. on the following dates: Wednesdays: 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, 12/1, 12/15. Tuesdays: 9/14, 9/28, 10/12, 10/26, 11/9, 11/23, 12/7

GAY BUDDHIST FRATERNITY: Hosts HIV+ practice/discussion group, Intro to Buddhism class and Vajrayana Chenrizig Sadhana. Call 415-974-9878 for info.

ABOUT HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

HSZC is a neighborhood Zen temple, the temple name of which is Issanji ("One Mountain Temple") in honor of its founder, Issan Dorsey Roshi, a Zen priest and gay man who started the center so that lesbians and gay men would have a comfortable place to practice Zen Buddhism. The center is independent and open to all people of all orientations and affiliations as a place to meditate and practice together. Hartford Street Zen Center operates in tandem with the Maitri Hospice, a home-like AIDS hospice established by Issan before his own death from AIDS in 1990. Issanji has a traditional Zendo (meditation hall), a well-stocked Buddhist library, a large garden, a bulletin board that serves as a clearing house for many Buddhist and other events, a living room area for tea and socializing and a kitchen. Because the kitchen is used primarily for the hospice, Issanji is not vegetarian, as are most Zen temples. There is one priest in residence, Abbot Zenshin {Philip} Whalen. Other priests and laypeople take part in the life of the temple and the hospice. We welcome anyone who would like to come by and see the temple or learn Zazen (Zen meditation). Please call the number on this newsletter and let Jerome know if you want to come by for the introduction session given on Mondays at 5 pm, or set up an appointment.

SANGHA NEWS

LAY INITIATIONS

Vestments were festive and the Zendo full to capacity for our May Lay Initiations (*Jukai*). On Sunday, May 23rd, Patrick Glennon and Frank Masson took the 16 precepts of Zen Buddhism from HSZC Abbot Zenshin Philip Whalen in the formal ceremony of conversion to Buddhism. The big, low gong of the lecture bell on the Zendo porch rolled down as a procession of hand-bell ringers and attendants led by the Abbot descended into the Zendo.

The trainees took their vows with the occasional participatory reading of the congregation. Vows taken during *Jukai* consist of the Three Refuges (in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Grave, or moral, Precepts, taken after receiving ritual purification and chanting the Verse of Confession. Each postulant received lineage papers tracing his Buddhist forbears down from the Buddha Shakyamuni to Zenshin Whalen through Zenshin's teacher, Baker roshi and his teacher, Suzuki roshi. Both postulants also received a small *o-juzu* (Buddhist "rosary") and a Buddhist name. Patrick was ordained Genzan Hokai (Dark Mountain Dharma Ocean), and Frank, Ryuzan Myokai (Dragon Mountain Shining Ocean). Finally, the ordainees were formally presented with the *rakusu* (small "bib" version of Buddha's robe) they had been hand-stitching for months according to the inherited Japanese tradition. Each *rakusu* was inscribed with the Buddhist name of its wearer by the Abbot.

After the ceremony, the living room was jammed with celebrants, Maitri staff, residents and volunteers and other attendees who enjoyed the food (especially the chocolate fudge cake contributed by Genzan). Congratulatory to Ryuzan and Genzan! (Genzan has written about his initiation elsewhere in this issue).

REMEMBERING HOUN MIKE GALLAGHER

We were all lucky to be present as Houn Mike Gallagher, surrounded by friends and Dharma siblings, took his formal vows as an *unsui*, or novice Zen priest, this June. Mike had been preparing for months for the ceremony, sewing his priest's robe (*o-kesa*) and other vestments and was close to his tokudo when a sudden severe attack of toxoplasmosis left him hospitalized and made speech and movement difficult if not close to impossible. His ordination had to be postponed, but the rest of the sangha was as determined as he was to see the ordination through.

After a couple of weeks of hospitalization, Mike's condition improved enough to allow him to be ordained in June. The Zendo was again full as Houn Tokuzan re-took as an *unsui* the vows he had first received from Philip at his *Jukai* two years ago. He was formally presented by Zenshin with his priest's robes and *o-kesa*. His new *rakusu* transformed from the navy blue of a lay Buddhist's to the black of a priest's. A long *o-juzu* and a shaved head completed the picture. The congregation was moved and impressed at Mike's sharp performance of the ceremony, even though he was very weary from his illness and his speech capabilities limited.

Mike passed away on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 1993 at home among friends and family, his lover Jim and his good friend Kenny Ireland at his side. Up until his death, Mike had been practicing as well as he could., even making sure Jim shaved his head every fourth and ninth day, as is the custom. Various members of the sangha had been over to see him, spend time with him, chant sutras and sit zazen with him the week of his death. Various people have commented that they felt very lucky to have spent this time with Mike.

Mike's passing was very peaceful. Jim and Kenny have noted that he was smiling in the moments before he died. In the days before his death, he seemed luminous, even when he was not consciously present. At this writing, we have been sitting zazen, chanting at Jim and Mike's house - not only to support Jim, but to help influence any subtle consciousness that lingers with Mike.

I know the sangha will greatly miss Houn. Mellow and affable, he helped to make us feel welcome, was an open, sweet and good-humored person. His presence was of great benefit to us all.

ZENDO UPKEEP CONTINUES

Perri and Marty have set up a small but important piece of business that helps to keep the Zendo clean enough so that you too will enjoy meditating there in peace without your mind being troubled by the notion that maybe you ought to get up right now, grab a dust cloth And wipe away the cobwebs waving in your peripheral vision.

On the Zendo bulletin board is an 8 1/2" by 11" piece of paper listing various zendo chores. The idea is that you sign up for a one month shift in which you come by once a week whenever you can to do that specific chore. Then the month is over and it's someone else's turn to sign up. We are having trouble getting people to fill the shifts. Perhaps you'll consider it.

MEANWHILE...David Prowler and Jackie Weltman gave some of the most flat, unpneumatic of zafus a good stuffing this July with the kapok that Mike Gallagher donated to the Zendo. Of course, there are plenty of pancake-type cushions left.

COMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

ALAN WATTS VIDEO SERIES: 2 SIX WEEK SERIES OF LECTURES ON TAPE

Starting Tuesday, September 21st at 8 p.m. and continuing successive Tuesday nights at the same time at HSZC there will be a six week series of questions and discussion. This video foot-scholar of Buddhism, philosophy and religion, especially in its formative "beat" years,

The series will be curated, shown and discussed by the Rev. Ananda Dalenberg, a long time student of Alan Watts and a Zen



of Alan Watts lectures on videotape followed by questions and discussion. This video foot-scholar of Buddhism, philosophy and religion, especially in its formative "beat" years,

and discussed by the Rev. Ananda Dalenberg, a priest.

Alan Watts

DHARMA SISTERS AND GAY BUDDHIST FRATERNITY MEETING AT HSZC

DHARMA SISTERS is a group for lesbians and bi women practicing or interested in learning about any form of Buddhism. Members come from all traditions and are beginners and long-term practitioners alike. Monthly meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at HSZC for a period of meditation followed by a practice sharing and discussion meeting. Weekly women's sitting group meets at HSZC alternate Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Special events are being planned. All women welcome. Call: 415-826-7990

GAY BUDDHIST FRATERNITY is a group for gay men practicing or or interested in learning more about any form of Buddhism. They are comprised of members of all traditions and a broad range of experience. They have meetings, sittings, retreats, Dharma talks, special events and focus groups. Vajrayana, HIV+ and Introduction to Buddhism groups meet at HSZC. 24 hour Voiceline for information and messages: 415-974-9878

AN EVENING FOR LESBIAN, GAY AND BI BUDDHISTS

Join a large gathering of fellow practitioners for an evening of meditation, Dharma talks and then socializing and snacks as we converge for the first time at the Women's Building: **Saturday, November 13th from 7 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.** Bring a meditation cushion (if you have one) and we will turn the newly renovated, attractive wood dining hall into a meditation hall! Dharma talks by teachers or senior students will be followed by a time to relax and get to know each other. Call 415-826-7990 (Jackie, Dharma Sisters) or 415- 974-9878 (GBF) for more information. Co-sponsored by Dharma Sisters and the Gay Buddhist Fraternity. Donation of \$3 - 5 requested to cover expenses only.



HARTFORD STREET MEMBERSHIP - SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

You have received this newsletter - so you are on the Hartford Street mailing list. But many of you are not practicing or supporting members - people who with their presence or financial donation keep the activities at our Zendo going. Many resources are needed to run the Maitri Hospice, but fewer are needed for the running of Hartford St. It would not take very much for you to help support the costs of printing and mailing this newsletter you are receiving, keep supplies in the zendo, or allow a teacher to stay in residence at HSZC.

What does it take to be a member of the Hartford Street Zen Center? There are 2 levels of membership: supporting and practicing. A **supporting member** may only donate money to Hartford St., whether or not he or she is actively practicing there. A **practicing member** must have sat in the Zendo on a regular basis for three months and must request a personal informal interview with the abbot. We also request that practicing members make some financial remuneration for support of the center. Only practicing members are the sangha who yearly vote for the HSZC Board and help to make decisions in the annual membership meeting.

If you have a personal interest in whether or not the Hartford St. Zendo is able to continue to benefit the spiritual practice of those in the community and in what kind of place HSZC becomes, we request that you become a supporting or practicing member. Begin to sit at the zendo on regular occasions and introduce yourself to the abbot and other members.

HOW PATRICK JOHN MICHAEL GLENNON BECAME GENZAN HOKAI: BORN AGAIN?

If any of you young'uns dering how all of a sudden one of bers came to have a new Bud-and lineage papers, I'm here to just another coming into Being

Perhaps you don't know bald-headed guy: the one with "almost recovered Irish Catholic my mistakes as an occasional you still don't recognize me, for-own identity these days, having certificate in a Jukai (lay spring. More about that event



hanging out at Issanji Temple are won-your more mature fellow sangha mem-dhist name, his own hand-sewn rakusu tell you how it happened. It's essentially of one more American Zen Buddhist. me. Here's some identification: I'm that the big white moustache - a self-styled from New Orleans." Perhaps you've heard "gong-klonger" during zendo services. If get it. Frankly, I'm not quite certain of my recently received a kind of new birth bodhisattva initiation) ceremony this past shortly.

First, let it be understood that my acceptance of a new Buddhist identity on that occasion should not be construed as a rejection of any of the circumstances surrounding my 1936 genesis. I like the name that was given to me then, for instance, and fully acknowledge the heritage that produced it. Instead, I feel that the new awareness that attends the regeneration I have recently claimed signifies a vast enhancement to my established heredity. In other words, it represents something I have accepted - - or was "awakened to" - - in addition to it soon after I discovered this other new identity at the Hartford Street Zen Center.

There's a coincidence involved right from the start of events that led up to that recognition: While trying to organize their chronology for this article, I discovered that the date appointed for the Jukai ceremony - May 23rd - was exactly a year and a half from the very day that I first walked through the front door of 57 Hartford Street. I had come there unannounced to check out the place.

It was a Saturday morning, November 23rd, 1991. After being allowed in and having passed through the entrance hall, I found myself in the dining room. Sitting there, in all of his Suchness, at the far end of the dining room table, a cup of something and a newspaper in front of him, was a bespectacled older gentleman. Portly, (but sort of impish, I thought), with an imposing shaved head, he was wearing a short sleeved, V-necked T-shirt; the scene was very casual.

I had no way of knowing that this was Zenshin Ryufu, Abbot of Issanji - One Mountain Temple. Had I been able to identify him, I still couldn't have guessed what a "Zenshin" might be or an "Issanji" either (computer components perhaps?). If I had been asked then what a *rakusu* was, I might have suggested a variety of "kudzu" - the rapacious vine that spreads uncontrollably across much of the Southern countryside.

"Hello, I'm Patrick," I began, "and I've come to sit." I think I admitted then that I had learned zazen only a short time previously in one of the group introductions at Zen Center on Page Street. "I'm Philip," this formidable presence said. "If you want to sit, that's fine; but you're too early." I'd forgotten about such details, but he added, "Of course, you can go down to the zendo anyway. You can sit there as long as you like. [Pause]. You can sit there until your eyes bubble out "

Following this somewhat disquieting invitation, he took me down to the zendo to show me around and to check out my sitting posture. I sat on the cushion he indicated in the *agura* posture (a loose cross-legged sitting posture) which I still use since I cannot manage even a half-lotus with much comfort for very long. "Well, whatever is comfortable. Just be sure your back is straight and that your knees are touching the mat," he instructed. "Your hands," - or did he say 'mudra'? - "should be resting halfway between your navel and your pecker." It was then that I became convinced that this was indeed "the" Philip Whalen, poet and Zen monk about whom I had heard enough to want to get to know him better. I also felt a glimmer of hope that, if I were lucky, he might even become my teacher. To my great delight and astonishment, this has actually happened. As evidence, I can now point with pride to the new name Zenshin recently bestowed

upon me in the elegant Jukai ceremony already mentioned.

In some systems, Buddhist names are constructed from Chinese characters that reflect the teacher's assessment of the student's current situation and then project a possible future state. This can be demonstrated in the name that Zenshin created for me, which is reproduced below in his own handwriting:

In this illustration, the left hand column, read down, contains the Chinese characters for the new name. They are translated in Japanese reading in the center column: "Gen Zan Ho Kai." The right hand

玄	GEN	DARK
山	ZAN	MOUNTAIN
法	HŌ	DHARMA
海	KAI	OCEAN

column contains the English translation: "Dark Mountain Dharma Ocean." The name therefore projects that a current condition (dark, mysterious or abstruse mountain) has the potential to become a "Dharma Ocean."

I am deeply stirred by the encouragement implied in this name, even though there is no guarantee of its actualization. If any assurance can be found, it is of the kind we find in the familiar verse we chant before lecture, which contains this daunting admonition: "An unsurpassed, penetrating and perfect Dharma/ Is rarely met with even in a hundred thousand million kalpas." Hyperbole? No matter. So much for instant gratification. Suggested practice: Infinite patience.

Such caveats cannot undermine, however, my appreciation of how my handsome new name resonates with those hopeful and invigorating feelings I began to experience some time before it was given to me. I speak of those feelings I recognized increasingly throughout my admittedly brief preceding history of zazen practice as well as those that developed during the study of the precepts while preparing for the Jukai.

As a consequence of "receiving the precepts" (which is the literal meaning of *Jukai*) I have felt that even further progress has occurred in an indefinable yet undeniably positive kind of transformation. Some reasons for my reaction may be clarified by Abbot Tenshin Anderson's commentary on the 1992 ZCSF Jukai ceremony. He describes the event as "...an initiation into a fresh new life and at the same time a coming home...We avow all the things we have done, from beginningless time [i.e. our 'ancient twisted karma']...and we burn them up by this avowal, setting ourselves free and ready to receive the precepts of the Buddha way. And we...feel free from our past karma. *As though we can actually change and start fresh on the path.*" (emphasis mine).

This promise is especially revitalizing to me. I need not tell you members of Issan-Ji sangha, a community unique in that so many of us have seen at close range the dreadful consequences of the AIDS epidemic, what the awful dimensions of human suffering can be. In my own struggle to cope with the devastation of anxiety and personal loss over more than a decade of witness to this catastrophe, I have been brought close to despair frequently and to a debilitating spiritual torpor. During these terrible times - - their nadir, I suppose, being my discovery in August 1989 that I, too, am HIV+ - - the past consolations of "normal" times (i.e.: religion, friends and even family) have too often been unreliable or sometimes have failed utterly to help relieve my distress.

However, somewhere in the midst of this darkness, I read about Issan Tommy Dorsey who died of AIDS in 1990, and from various sources I began to hear more about his extraordinary life, a life contemporary with mine. His compassionate activity in founding Maitri, our AIDS hospice, was especially striking to me. The energy from the bright spark of Issan's example moved me toward the discovery of zazen, Zen Buddhism and Maitri. Now that I have received the precepts, I feel that a virtual fire has been ignited in me which continues to fuel a refreshing displacement of accidie with activism, anxiety with equanimity. I have

found a measure of contentment.

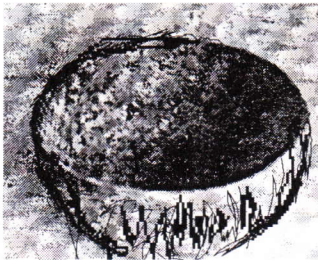
A recent statement of Kwong roshi of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center examines such cause and effect: "When the thinking mind reaches darkness," he explains, "that's when this other presence emerges...That's where zazen mind, or this universal mind that we all share, is so great and vast." He adds:

"Buddhist teachings come from a very deep place of human suffering. If human suffering weren't so bad as it is, there'd be no Buddhism or need for Buddhism. I don't mean to make it sound pessimistic or negative, but because there's great suffering, there's also great freedom, and great compassion and wisdom, which is just like the lotus coming out of the mud. From this great suffering comes the beautiful lotus."

I have begun to identify in myself the sensations that Kwong roshi describes: "You can feel the expansiveness, the lightness and joy that practicing the Dharma brings to our lives." In fact, to use an abused expression, it is like being "born again"! Whatever loaded connotations this catchword has incurred, it nevertheless describes a recognizable experience. Actually, I much prefer Allen Ginsberg's similar but more evocative declaration of how phenomenal this rebirth can be: "I sit inside the shell of the old Me," he writes in his poem "Why I Meditate." I have also experienced the exhilaration of such a release.

I have all of you at Issanji sangha to thank for my "fresh gaze" and new life. The scuttling of "the old Me" was especially concentrated in the Jukai. Thank you for making that splendid ritual the moving, auspicious occasion it was for me. However, without Houn Michael Gallagher, recently ordained unsui, who was there to assist Zenshin - - and to provide skillful crowd control - - the ceremony would not have been so impressive. Mike will always be in my heart for his inspiring, valuable presence.

Frank Masson, i.e.: Ryuzan Myokai ("Dragon Mountain Shining Ocean - the name he received in the spring initiation) was a much appreciated companion throughout the ceremony itself. His ostensible "cool" helped me (was I nervous? Who, me?). I am also grateful to Ryuzan Masson for making a beautiful fukuro (cloth bag for storing the rakusu) for me. My rakusu could not have been produced without and patient assistance in this I have especially Lin Zenki of SFZC to thank. For their generous participation in or attended the Jukai, as well as to my other friends who were overwhelmed me.



And to the other sangha members who participated in or attended the Jukai, as well as to my other friends who were overwhelmed me.

Finally, I gassho in heartfelt respect and the deepest gratitude to Zenshin Philip Whalen, the Abbot of Issanji. He has provided inestimable help in pointing me toward a promising new life and in patiently directing my first crucial steps on a challenging road. It is hard to believe that I have been so fortunate in finding such a knowledgeable, giving, kind and wise teacher as a guide on this liberating journey. May it lead from dark mountain to Dharma ocean.

And so, this exhortation:

We begin the work
may it continue
the great transmutation
may it continue
a new heaven and a new earth
may it continue
may it continue **

**Diane Di Prima, "Life Chant," from *Pieces of a Song - Selected Poems*, S.F. : City Lights Books, 1990.

STREET RETREAT 1993

Rev. Jerome Peterson

The ad was in *The Ten Directions* - magazine of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. A retreat on the streets of New York City to be led by Tetsugen Glassman, abbot of the Zen Community of New York. After having done volunteer work in a soup kitchen for over five years, maybe it is time to find out what it is really like on the streets. The schedule calls for two periods of zazen in an outdoor zendo. I wonder what they do with all the rest of the time? All meals will be taken from soup kitchens. Sleeping will be done at shelters or bus terminals. Personal money is to be limited to two dollars a day, no credit cards.

Thinking it over, I decide to go. It should be a new experience for me, a chance to do something that I have never done before. We meet Sunday morning at Glassman sensei's house for breakfast and orientation. The retreat is not going to be very large: only nine full-time participants.

Then came the first test: a walk of about four or five miles to the subway station. We take a subway from Yonkers into New York City. Very warm walking but still quite easy as the ground is mostly level.

My partner and I walk from the subway to our lunch stop only to find out we have arrived too late. It is already closed. We have to wait until 2:30 for some sandwiches.

After eating and resting, zendo. We use the same place not far away from the Bowery. Discussion about where we would go was offered, but we declined. After zazen it was time for the vespers of John the Divine. It was an im- chanting. I felt that it gave a street retreat.

It was too early to go to have some pizza. But first we had to go to the street to pay for it. In less



we take our first walk to our every day for zazen - a small park. After zazen, there was a discussion about where we would go to sleep that night. Several suggestions were offered, but we settled on trying to sleep on the street to walk to our supper. As we had no money, we had to go to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for a service with some nice touch to the start of our

the subway, so we decided to had to "collect" some money off the street. In less than two hours we had over five dollars to which we added some of our money to buy a pizza, and we all had a slice.

Time to go to bed, so we walked to the subway, transferred, and got on one of the longest lines to New Jersey. The subway had the big advantage of being cool, so at first it was comforting, but then the noise seemed to take over my awareness. I never really did get to sleep. About the time some people were asleep, the subway police came on board and woke everyone up. So much for trying to sleep on the subway.

Walk to breakfast. I am beginning to realize that most of our day is spent walking. Walking to breakfast, walking to the zendo. Today we are all sleeping from not getting enough rest on the subway. We go to a small park near the East River to sleep.

By the second day, I realize that I need a water bottle to carry in order always to have some water to drink. Feeling hot, sweaty and thirsty from walking, it was only near the East River in the shade that I felt comfortable and could relax. We chose to sleep in a nice, restful park that evening and were not disturbed.

It never really occurred to me to think about what I was doing in a way that gave a label to what I was doing, but looking at it now it seems to me that it was only another variation of the old Buddhist practice of exchanging self with other.

SELECTIONS FROM BOX, A FLAT BOX CONTAINING A NUMBER OF CARDS UPON WHICH ARE PRINTED CERTAIN WORDS, BY DAVID PROWLER (READYMADE PRESS, 1991)

Yes and no are lies

•

$$\frac{X}{\text{People}} = \frac{\text{Astronomy}}{\text{Fish}}$$

•

What is the opposite of a miracle?

•

Are you for or against indifference?

•

Without hope there can be no disappointment

•

What is it we love about hate?
What is it that is so satisfying about desire?

•

He wanted renunciation and detachment so bad it hurt.

"There is a Zen text entitled, *The Huang-Po Doctrine of Universal Mind*, which has been extremely meaningful for me. It contains this magnificent statement, "Imitate the sands of the Ganges who are not pleased by perfume and who are not disgusted by filth." This could be the basis of any useful ethic we are going to need for a global village. We are going to have to get over the need for likes and dislikes."

-John Cage 1912-1993, American Composer